

TO: Members of the House Education Reform Committee
FROM: Kevin Stotts, President, Talent 2025
DATE: January 11, 2018
RE: Oppose House Bill 4501 – Make WorkKeys Optional

On behalf of Talent 2025 and our more than 110 business leaders in West Michigan, I write to share our opposition to House Bill 4501, as it seeks to make optional the WorkKeys assessment for Michigan high school students.

Background

Since 2007, every Michigan 11th-grade student has been required to take the three ACT WorkKeys® assessments needed to earn an ACT WorkKeys NCRC. These measures have helped high school students better understand their college and career readiness levels. The ACT WorkKeys assessments are embedded into efforts of community colleges and workforce development organizations across the state. The result: Michigan is the number one state in the nation on a per capita basis for ACT WorkKeys NCRCs earned.

The ACT WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate™ (ACT WorkKeys NCRC®) is a nationally recognized workplace skills credential that documents skill levels. To earn an ACT WorkKeys NCRC, an individual takes three ACT WorkKeys® assessments that measure skills critical to on-the-job success: Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information.

Since 2011, Talent 2025 has convened leaders from business, education, workforce development, and economic development to address the talent needs of the region's employers. The WorkKeys assessment has been a fundamental part of our collective strategy to improve the quality of the region's workforce for the following reasons:

1. These assessments measure foundational skills required for success in the workplace, skills found to be most essential across industries and occupations, and
2. These assessments are fully integrated into the career technical education programs at the K-12 and community college level as a method of ensuring individuals have the necessary skill level to successfully complete a program.
3. Over 250 West Michigan employers now utilize the assessments to assess job candidates fit for open positions.

Opposition

House Bill 4501 would remove a critical, measurable way for employers to assess the work readiness of high school graduates. The bill would disconnect K-12 education from Michigan's extensive workforce development efforts, including those among the state's community colleges and Michigan Works! offices. And it would void the significant investments made in WorkKeys by the state of Michigan since 2007.

Again, I ask that you OPPOSE House Bill 4501, as it would remove a critical component of Michigan's effort to improve the quality of tomorrow's workforce, make it more difficult for employers to evaluate the fit of job candidates for open positions, and void the investments made over the last 10 years.

Thank you for your consideration.